



10 Tips for Successful Public Speaking

1. **Know your material** – Pick a topic that interests you, and have more to say about it than you include in your speech. If you're not excited about your message, your audience won't get excited about it, either.
2. **Practice, Practice, Practice** – Rehearse out loud and in front of a mirror (I know it's cliché, but it works!). If you'll be using any audio/visual equipment, such as a microphone, practice with that equipment so it doesn't feel unfamiliar.
3. **Know your audience** – Greet people as they arrive, and strike up conversations. It's easier to speak in front of friends than strangers.
4. **Know your venue** – If you can, arrive early and get a feel for the space. Practice your speech on site.
5. **Be natural** – Move around, use hand gestures, and speak conversationally. But don't rock back and forth or fidget; that demonstrates nervousness.
6. **Connect with your audience** – Make eye contact with people, and try to get them to affirm what you're saying with nods of the head and smiles. Don't engage people in debates, however, as that will throw off the flow of your speech.
7. **Remember that your audience wants you to succeed** – Audiences want you to be interesting and informative. They want to enjoy your speech, and are not rooting for you to fail.
8. **Don't apologize** – If you're nervous, or if something goes wrong, don't call attention to it. The audience probably didn't notice.
9. **Concentrate on the message** – It's easy to get hung up on your own anxieties, or worry about how the audience will respond. But if you focus on the importance of *what* you're saying, your speech will be stronger.
10. **Gain experience** – The key to effective speaking is confidence, and the more you practice public speaking, the more you will feel comfortable doing it. Don't shy away from opportunities to practice this skill!